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ABSTRACT

Presented as a course outline, this process is intended to introduce adults to self-directed learning principles and techniques. Initially, entry level skills or competencies are specified, and the course goal and objectives are stated. Following the goal statement, three objectives, embodying strategies and resources, are presented. Objectives, in part, require that the learner complete a model education program self-directed learner competency profile, identify personal learning needs, and state identified learning needs as learning objectives. A bibliography, literary resources, methods, and schedule are provided. Finally, guidelines for determining learning accomplishments and evaluating the process are outlined. (CSS)

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Introduction to Self-Directed Learning

Note: The following outline represents a process for introducing adults to self-directed learning principles and techniques. Great flexibility is possible within the framework presented here. The approach is presently used within and outside of university settings. However, it should be helpful, as a course, to learners and facilitators within the university who desire self-directed learning. As presented, the content meets the special needs of participants in Region VIII, Department of Labor, Model Education Program.*

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Research and Evaluation
Model Education Program (MEP)

* A program designed to prepare employees of the ETA funded programs throughout the region for Human Resource Management positions in CETA, Job Service, Unemployment Insurance and related programs.

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Course Outline

INTRODUCTION TO SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Entry Level Skills or Competencies

1. Interest in and personal acceptance of responsibility for your own learning.
2. Ability to identify your personal goals.
3. Willingness to assist in the determination of your learning needs.
4. Acceptance of the major responsibility for designing, implementing and evaluating your career development.

Goal

To introduce the basic principles and techniques related to the processes of self-directed learning for adults.

Objectives

To--

1. Diagnose your learning needs and strengths through completion of a pre-and post-assessment of self-directed learner competencies using the Model Education Program Profile of Self-Directed Learner Competencies.

2. Identify the major principles and techniques of self-directed learning that relate to your needs as an adult learner through a comparison of your needs and the major principles and techniques outlined in Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers by Malcolm S. Knowles.

3. Design, implement and evaluate a Learning Contract based on one or more of your learning needs; using the contract outlined in Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers.

Strategies and Resources

Objectives

Objective #1: (at the beginning and end of the course)

Complete the Model Education Program Self-Directed Learner Competency Profile as outlined/described.

Identify personal strength and need areas.

Use identified need areas as bases for setting learning goals and objectives.

(at the end of the course) Determine self-directed learning "growth" during quarter/semester by comparing the pre-and post-profile results; by identifying improved need areas.

Objective #2:

Identify personal learning needs.

Compare personal needs and the appropriate major principles and techniques outlined in Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers.

Determine a preferred method of summarizing and presenting the results of the comparison above.

Present the summary.

Objective #3:

State the identified learning needs as learning objectives. (i.e. what is to be learned)

Determine the activities or strategies and resources necessary to meet the objectives. (i.e. how the learning will occur; the plan of action; people, places, things, time, dates, etc.)

Determine the evidence of learning to be submitted. (i.e. proof of learning, products, demonstrations, etc.)

Determine the criteria, persons involved and the methods to be used in evaluating the learning progress; grade preferences.

Discuss the tentative learning contract with the instructor and identified resource persons.

Sign the learning contract; obtain signatures of the instructor and resource persons.

Bibliography

1. Gross, Ronald, The lifelong learner. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977.
2. Knowles, M.S., The modern practice of adult education: Andragogy vs. pedagogy. New York: Association Press, 1970.
3. _____, Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers. New York: Association Press, 1975.
4. Pine, G.J. and Horne, D.J., Principles and conditions for learning in adult education. Adult Leadership, 1969 18(4) 108-111.

5. Vitro, F.T., Implication of self-concept theory for education of the "total adult". Adult Leadership, June 1971.

6. Zahn, J.C., Differences between adults and youth affecting learning. Adult Education, 1967, 17(2).

Literary Resources

1. Course Text: Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers, Malcolm S. Knowles, Association Press, New York, 1975.

2. Supplemental Readings:

   Readings identified by learners in their Learning Contracts

   Model Education Program materials: Orientation Seminar packet, Career Planning Seminar packet, Individualized Degree Planning Seminar packet

   The Adult Learner (see bibliography); The Modern Practice of Adult Education by Malcolm S. Knowles, Association Press, New York, 1973; mimeographed materials

Methods

1. Classes, seminars, workshops, internships, independent studies, on the job training opportunities, conferences, interview, etc.; to be identified by the learner; facilitators.
2. Personal need diagnosis.
3. Learning Contract development (Knowles).
4. Self-Directed Learning methods and techniques for adults.
5. Based on individual need: reading, writing, observation, consultation, visitation, demonstration, discussion, review and evaluation.
6. Balance: cognitive, affective and skill areas; own learning style

   individual and group interaction

   theoretical and experiential approaches

Schedule

The following suggested course content areas (see objectives) may be distributed to meet learner, facilitator and institutional needs:

Introduction, Orientation
Personal Learning Need Diagnosis
Self-Directed Learning and The Adult
Learning Contract Design (Knowles)
Learning Contract Implementation
Self-Directed Learning Summary Presentations
Learning Contract Evaluation

Evidence of Learning Accomplishments

1. Completed profile; identification of strength and need areas as a self-directed learner.
2. Comparative summary of relevant self-directed learning principles and techniques.
3. Demonstration; presentation.
4. Learning contract; implementation; evaluation.
5. Other evidence resulting from activities initiated by the learner and/or the facilitator(s).

Evaluation

1. (On entering and exiting from the course)
   Completion of the Model Education Program Profile of Self-Directed Learner Competencies
2. (Following contract implementation)
   Evaluation procedures outlined and developed by the learner in the Learning Contract. Criteria, persons involved, methods and procedures should be specified. The learner, peers, facilitators or resource persons may be involved.
3. (Following completion of the course)
   Review of the process by the learner, peers, facilitators and/or resource person(s); criteria to be jointly established.

Use of the Profile of Self-Directed Learner Competencies
in the
Model Education Program
U.S. Department of Labor, Region VIII

The Profile of Self-Directed Learner Competencies is used in the Model Education Program (MEP) to help the learner determine readiness to proceed in a degree program based on self-directed learning approaches; to determine personal growth as a self-directed learner during or following completion of the program.

Use of the profile enables the learner to:

- identify the performance elements necessary for self-directed learners;
- identify and assess additional self-directed learner elements considered important to the learner;
- identify personal strengths and needs related to 7 major competency areas; 29 elements;
- determine self-progress (growth) as a self-directed learner in an on-going manner;
- relate individual strengths and needs to group strengths and needs through a comparison of individual and group profiles;
- identify human resources within the peer group.

The following assumptions are made in relation to use of the Self-Directed Learner Competency Profile in the MEP:

1. As self-directed persons, adults vary in their degrees of self-directed learner competency.
2. Self-directed learner competencies are necessary for adults in a world of rapid change; for adults involved in continuing education, independent study, external degree programs or the preparation of portfolios related to the assessment of prior learning.
3. Self-directed learners should see themselves in (non-competitive) relationships to peers.
4. How something is learned may be as important as what is learned.
5. A self-directed process for learning helps adults learn in many varied settings.

6. Self-directed learning approaches are necessary and possible in traditional and non-traditional settings.

The MEP participant completes the Profile of Self-Directed Learner Competencies at the first group (Orientation) session. At this meeting, the participant reviews information regarding the MEP and self-directed learning approaches. The text Self-Directed Learning by Malcolm S. Knowles is distributed. Participants are encouraged to view self-evaluation as an on-going and necessary process related to the identification of personal needs, goal setting, outlining of learning strategies, identification of resources and providing evidence of their learning accomplishment.

The performance elements included in the profile represent the positive end of a continuum. The learner, therefore, relates to a positive standard which lessens feelings of personal threat; decreases response bias or invalidation. Although the individual profiles are collected (and later returned to each participant, with copies of the group profile), participants are not required to sign the profiles. Most of them initial or "mark" each sheet if they do not sign their names.

If you have questions regarding use of the Profile of Self-Directed Learner Competencies please contact the Model Education Program office:

The Regency
Director's Room 109
3900 Elati
Denver, CO 80216

Ph: (303) 837-5923

Profile of Self-Directed Learner Competencies

Directions: Read each item and rate your personal level of performance by placing a small x at the appropriate level for each competency listed. Join the x's with a straight line.

Region VIII, Department of Labor
Model Education Program

"Performance Elements"	None	Weak	Fair	Strong
I. Self-Acceptance (strengths, weaknesses, personal worth)				
II. Enthusiasm (reflects, actively expresses interest)				
III. Accepts Responsibility for Learning				
Initiative (self-starter)				
Independence (works on own)				
Inquiry (curiosity)				
Assertiveness (willing to take first step)				
Resource awareness/utilization (learning from people, places, things)				
Designer (relates ideas, plans own learning)				
IV. Learning and Result Focus (discovering and applying knowledge)				
Goal setting (where am I going?)				
Diagnosing personal learning needs				
Translating needs to objectives (How will I get there?)				
Problem solving (working it out)				

11.

	None	Weak	Fair	Strong
Implementation (carrying it out)				
Tenacity (holding on)				
Willingness to follow through (completing it)				
Evaluation (how will I know I'm there)				
Seeing and relating to totals (the whole picture)				
Seeing and relating to parts (what's in the picture?)				
V. Flexibility				
Alteration of direction (changing when necessary)				
Open-mindedness (reception to new ideas)				
Collaboration (cooperation)				
Willingness to risk (decision to move in face of uncertain loss)				
Tolerance for ambiguity (multiple interpretation)				
Recognition of "dead ends" (knowing where to change)				

12.

	None	Weak	Fair	Strong
VI. Creativity (originally expressive)				
VII. Integrity (adhering to personal code of behavior; wholeness)				

Did you rate your performance for each competency and draw a line between the x's?

Please identify your profile by marking or signing <u>each</u> <u>sheet</u>. The profile will be returned for your use in determining your growth as a self-directed learner.